

PROCEEDINGS  
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A NEW REITHRODONTOMYS FROM WESTERN  
NEBRASKA.

BY MERRITT CARY.

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Among some mammals collected by me in the Sand Hill region of Nebraska, in the spring and fall of 1901, is a well marked species of *Reithrodontomys* which has hitherto remained undescribed. It may be known from the following description:

***Reithrodontomys albescens* sp. nov.**

*Type* from 18 miles northwest of Kennedy, Nebraska, ♂ adult, No. 116-358, United States National Museum, Biological Survey Collection. Collected October 31, 1901, by Merritt Cary. Original number 411.

*General characters.*—Size small; tail short (ratio of length of tail to total length 45); colors extremely pale; pelage long, full and soft; ears small, with two distinct black spots.

*Color.*—Sides pale buffy gray; dorsum darker and plain gray, or with a tinge of buff; lateral line, between the pinkish buff and cream buff of Ridgway, continuous from cheeks to thighs; sides of nose, lower portion of cheeks, throat, forelegs and rest of underparts pure white; tail well haired, sharply bicolor, the dark line on upper surface narrow; upper surfaces of feet white.

*Cranial characters.*—Compared with *nebracensis* from the same type locality the skull is much smaller (averaging 1.62 mm. shorter, and 8 mm. narrower across mastoids, in a series of 5 adults), with relatively shorter rostrum and narrower interparietal; nasals less deeply concave above.

*Measurements.*—Three adult specimens from type locality average: total length, 125; tail vertebrae, 53.5; hind foot, 16.6. Type: Total length, 124; tail vertebrae, 54; hind foot, 16.5. Skull of type: Basal length, 15.7; occipito-nasal length, 19.7; nasals, 17.4; zygomatic breadth, 10.5; mastoid breadth, 9.

*Specimens examined.*—Total number 18, from the following localities: Nebraska: Neligh 11, Kennedy 5, Cody 1. South Dakota: Belle Fourche River (15 miles from mouth) 1.

*Distribution.*—Sand hill region of central and western Nebraska, and western South Dakota. Limits of range unknown.

*Habits.*—This species, so far as at present known, occurs only in sand hills, or on sandy land, where it appears to subsist to a large extent on seeds of various grasses. Near Kennedy, in October, I secured several specimens by overturning millet shocks in a sandy field. When uncovered the little fellows would scurry to their nest for refuge.

The nests were compact little balls of fine grass, and were either on or just beneath the surface of the ground under the shock. A small opening on one side led into a little cavity in the interior, in which was a store of millet seeds.

At both Kennedy and Neligh, in sand bur and weed patches in the sand hills *albescens* and *nebracensis* were about equally abundant, but traps set in meadows or marshy tracts secured only *nebracensis*.

*Remarks.*—This handsome little species requires no close comparison with any described *Reithrodontomys*.

From *nebracensis* it differs in much smaller size and paler coloration, entirely lacking the strong fulvous suffusion. The ears are relatively much shorter, and the rusty hairs at their bases are scarcely noticeable, or entirely wanting. The tail is much more sharply bicolor and the black stripe is confined to the upper fourth.

One October specimen from Kennedy, and two November specimens from Neligh, are pale ashy gray, with no trace of the buff. Whether or not this is the normal winter pelage is yet to be determined.

A June specimen from Belle Fourche River, South Dakota, considered by Allen (Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N. Y. VII, p. 123, 1895,) a pale specimen of *nebracensis*, seems to be referable to *albescens*.